A NEEDFUL CORRECTIVE OR BALLANCE IN Popular Government,

Expreſſed in a Letter to

IAMES HARRINGTON, Eſquire,

Upon occaſion of a late Treatiſe of his;

And publiſhed as ſeaſonable in the preſent Juncture of Affaires.

SIR,

THE high eſteem and reverence you bear (and that deſervedly) unto humane Prudence, (which the more ancient the date is that you ſet to it, is doubtleſs the better, as moſt partaking of its primitive purity) does nevertheleſs, I fear, outweigh with you, beyond what it ought, to the derogation and prejudice of that pattern for Magiſtracy it ſelf, which was ſhewn unto *Moſes* in the Mount, during

the forty dayes in which the body of that godly Man was nouriſhed, without the help of ſecondary meanes, and yet lived not upon the air, but upon every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God: In the wiſdom of which Word he was then taught to ſee the moſt excellent platforme of Civil Government; as having its root and inward principles, as well as its outward adminiſtration flowing from Divine Inſtitution & revelation: of which we may well ſuppoſe, that the abilities in *Jethro* a Heathen (that appeared in the advice he gave touching the outward order to be obſerved for the adminiſtration of Juſtice in the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*) did fall very ſhort, although there be nothing contained in the one, which may not have witneſs and juſtification given unto it by the other, as was the caſe between *Jethro* and *Moſes*; yet *Moſes* was he, that by converſing face to face with God, and receiving the lively Oracles, was much better qualified to lay down the rules of a perfect Common-wealth Government then *Jethro* was, that by the help only of tradition, acquired gifts and experience, might arive to that skill in the rules of ancient Prudence, as to make him a very knowing and able Politician, and yet not to ſtand in competition with *Moſes*.

And ſince you have thought fit, in your Treatiſe ſhewing the *Prerogative of popular Government*, and very worthily aſſerting that cauſe, with great advantage on your part, againſt all adverſaries that are entred into the liſt with you, to annex to it certain Queries with this inſcription, *To the godly man*: Be pleaſed to take in good part this general return that is made therennto, not with any intent to oppoſe, but rather conntenance the eſſentials of that Government you plead for, and perfect the principles of true freedom, which are taught by ancient Prudence, to the rendring us a holy as well as a free people: In which Spirit of holineſs you may become invinſible againſt the very Clergy themſelves, that have begun to undertake you; as you alſo, in requital, have not a little unmasked them in their pretended ordination, which they, as the Presbytery, would fain ingroſs and uſurp to themſelves, without the free conſent of the Congregation.

Nor will it be much material in this, to know from whom this comes to you, under any other notion, then the *Advocate for the godly Man*, to whom your Queries are directed; it being indeed from one that cannot be wrought off from a ſincere and hearty friendſhip and value of true godlineſs; how ſhameful ſoever the miſcarriage hath been in theſe our dayes, of thoſe that having had only the form

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of it, have ſerved themſelves thereof to advance their worldly intereſts, to the making that very name to ſtink amongſt the Heathens and great Leviathans of the world; and therefore is deſirous to receive a clear information and reſolution from your ſelf, unto ſome Queries that you will find in the cloſe of this paper, directed to you, on the behalf of the *godly Man*; after ſome little diſcanting upon the nature of Government, in the general, and joyning in witneſs with you unto thoſe principles of common right and freedome, that muſt be provided for, in whatſoever frame of Government it be, which does pretend to a perfection in its kind.

By Government or Rule in general is to be underſtood that power which, *de facto*, comes to be ſet up as ſupreme, and is exerciſed over Nations or People by way of overſight and command for the good of the whole Body, in either of the three conditions of men you mention, whether of Servants, Subjects, or Citizens.

The riſe and being which is given to ruling Power amongſt Nations and Kingdomes, is not by chance, nor meerly through the will of Man, but hath its place found in Gods Ordinance and Inſtitution; for there is no Power but is of God, and the Powers that are ſprung either from his Authority and Commiſſion, or from his Tolleration and Permiſſion. So as upon one account or the other, we may truly ſay, they are ſo limited and ordered by him, whether it reſpect the form of their conſtitution, the force of their operation, or the time of their continuance, as well as the uſe and end which they ſerve unto, that when all is done, Power only belongs to God, who kils and makes alive, and puls down one and ſets up another, that it may be kuown, that the pillars of the Earth are his, and he hath ſet the World upon them, upholding all things by the Word of his Power; ſo as neither promotion nor abaſement does come from the Eaſt or from the Weſt, but from him alone, in order to bring to paſſe the work which he hath to do in the World, for the good of his Church and People.

However Government, conſidered as well in reference to the right as to the actual exerciſe of it, is ſeated alſo in the will of man, where it hath, next under God, its riſe and being. And the acceſs unto it is uſually had upon pretence of one of theſe three rights.

Firſt the right of conſent and free giſt by the common vote of the whole Body, which is the right door to enter into the exerciſe of ſupreme Power, and is genuine, natural, righteous, conſonant

to thoſe pure Principles of mans nature, wherein he was at firſt created, and does declare the governed to be in the ſtate of free Citizens, who as Brethren partaking of the Spirit of right reaſon, common to them as men made in the Image of God, are equally intituled to their own overſight and Government, and do therefore ſee cauſe voluntarily to aſſociate themſelves together, and on the grounds of common right and freedome, to agree to be ſubject and yeild obedience to the Laws, that are from time to time made amongſt them by their own free and common conſent. So as this ſort of Empire or Government is that of Laws, and not of Men, and is of a nature better agreeing with the many then the few, and leaſt of all with the ſingle perſon.

The ſecond is the right of conqueſt, which is alſo through the will of man uſurping and impoſing upon his Brethren, by force of armes, that which could not be obtained (as it ought) by free conſent, and is therefore held upon the ſame terms of force and violence, to the proclaiming the governed to be fallen into a ſtate of ſervants, if not of ſlaves, who hold all they have at the will of the Lord, and are in a condition moſt agreeing with the principles of abſolute Monarchy, as in practiſe began with *Nimrod*, and is yet to be ſeen in the Government of *Turkey*, and other Nations of the World.

Thirdly, There is a mixed right that is made up of both the former, to the rendring that tollerable, and, in ſome ſort, ſatisfying, in proceſs of time, which was at firſt moſt wickedly & unduly acquired: And is their caſe, who not being able to be free men, are reſolved to do their utmoſt not to be ſlaves; and ſo are brought to conſent to walk in the middle way, between both; agreeing to be ſubjects, or yeild ſubjection to their Ruler, upon condition of enjoying certain known rights and priviledges belonging to them as men; and which may diſtinguiſh them from meer ſlaves, and be laid as fundamental Laws of that conſtitution of Government. This way of obtaining the exerciſe of ſupreme Power, carrying in it the temper and mixture of the other two, is neither very good, nor ſtark nought; but is the worſe for this, that ſuch as are under it do ſeldome care to be better, they are ſo afraid, that by attempting to mend themſelves, they ſhall make themſelves irrecoverably worſe. This kind of Government agrees not with the principles of abſolute Monarchy, nor perfect popular freedome, but ſorts with Ariſtocracy, that is, the mixture of them both, and with regulated Monarchy, as that of Kings, Lords and Commons.

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The difficulty at first view appeares not to be great in introducing and settling a Government, where the people are conquered by force of armes, no more then (under the fright and apprehension of the fate of those that come to be reduced by the sword) to compound up the business in the middle way before mentioned, as this Nation hath often and dearly experienced in the changes of Governors, if not Governments, which they have been subject unto; So as the great clamour and objection lyes only against the first; that is, as to the practicableness of introducing and settling the exercise of the supreme Power, by the free and common consent of the Citizens, whose equality in power is apt to make their tempers luxuriant and immoderate, and keeps them from coming rightly to agree in a matter of such consequence.

Wherein first consideration is to be had by them, whether this high trust of the chief Magistracy shall be placed in one single person, or in a collective Body of Elders, or a Senate, consisting of more or fewer persons? And then,

Secondly, Whether this Power shall be transferred absolutely to the person or persons so chosen, or with limitation and condition?

To transferre it absolutely yeilds up with it the Legislative Power, and fixes it as well as the executive, in one and the same hand) admit it be to a single Person, or a Senate) and leaves nothing afterward unto the People but slavery and bondage, by putting forth all the Acts of Rule and Power without their consent.

But to conferre this Power rationally, and agreeably to the principles of ancient Prudence, is to reserve, by way of limitation, that which may so qualifie and regulate the supreme executive Power, in and by whatsoever hand it be exercised, as is able to preserve it within its due bounds as it is executive, and keeps the result of that wherein it is Legislative within the power and consent of the People.

This is easily done, by the help of a second order of men, ordained and constituted by the Peoples suffrage; who, in the capacity of their Deputies and Representative Body, are from time to time to make up one general Assembly with the Senate, by vertue of their Summons and call, and there to give the consent of the People to all Acts and Decrees that are Legislative and binding to the Common-wealth.

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The third thing to be done, in order to the right introducing and ſettling of Magiſtracy in a free State of Citizens, is to diſpoſe themſelves, or ſuffer themſelves to be diſpoſed into that order, which is requiſite, and may beſt conduce to the choice of meet and fit perſons into either of the two Aſſemblies, whether that of the Senate, or of the Peoples Repreſentative.

But the great difficulty remains yet to receive its ſolution, which is to ſhew how the depraved, corrupted, and ſelf-intereſted will of man, in the great Body, which we call the People, being once left to its own free motion, ſhall be prevailed with to eſpouſe their true publiick intereſt, and cloſely adhere to it, under the many tryals and diſcouragements they muſt be ſure to meet with, before they obtain what they purſue.

Which Objection being ſo experimental as it is, carries with it the greater force, and is obvious to moſt men; by reaſon whereof they rather chooſe the bondage whereinto they fall under the power of the ſword moderately uſed, then to commit themſelves to the boundleſs power of the peoples will unbridled, and unſubjected unto any rules from inward principles, or outward order and command.

However, in way of anſwer, there is that to be ſaid, which whether it will weigh in the judgements of others I know not, but it is conſiderable with me.

And firſt, it may be but needful to enquire whence this is, and alſo what is that which is wanting to ballance and compleat the motion of mans will, in the exerciſe of its own freedome, that it is ſo little to be truſted and relyed on, in the purſuit of that which is the common Intereſt of mankind, and the publick good of humane Societies. And if in this we ſearch to the bottom, we have it declared in that Scripture, which ſayes, *It is not in man to order his own ſteps.* Man, at his beſt, ſtands in need of the ballancing and ruling motion of Gods Spirit to keep him ſtedfaſt; let his nature be made, as it was at firſt, holy and righteous, when his will was morally bounded within the excellent limits that were ſet unto it by the Law of God, unto which he did bear a naturall and willing conformity in the ſpirit of his mind, and was under the dictates of a pure enlightened reaſon.

And how much therefore more does his nature and will want this ruling and moving influence now, from the Spirit of God, when

when it is at its worſt, not only to heal and reſtore what is loſt, but to add, by way of ſupply, that more grace that may preſerve from the danger of future relapſe. And this remedy is not alwayes at hand, nor in mans power to take up at his pleaſure. For as the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and none know whence it comes, and whither it goes; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit of God. And though it be eaſie with God to cauſe ſuch a Nation to be born at once, and to make the Earth bring forth in a day, by the extraordinary effuſion of his Spirit upon all fleſh, yet this is extraordinary, and very remote, as to the redreſs of the evil now in queſtion. Nevertheleſs, the conſideration of this takes ſo farre impreſſion with me, as to conclude no Nation truly free that is in bondage to corruption, and alienated from the life of God by wicked works, how much ſoever it be ſet at liberty in other reſpects, to uſe the power of its own will in providing for its own Government: But the People of it ought to be as ſenſible of their great want and miſery, in this reſpect, as they are forward to complain, and with great juſtice alſo, of the force of the ſword, which God permits very frequently to be kept up over them, till holy and righteous Principles be of more power and better reception with them.

But ſecondly, Until ſuch times of refreſhing and healing ſhall come, from the preſence of the Lord, upon the Nations of the World, as is promiſed in the laſt of dayes; we are to take care in the uſe of the ordinary meanes, daily afforded by Gods Providence, that are moſt conducing to guide and regulate the will of the People, unto their making a good choice of the Senate and their own Deputies, in order to meet together in one general Aſſembly, by them acknowledged the free and compleat Repreſentation of the whole Nation. And then, this being once done, and thereby the firſt great wheel of the Common-wealth ſet upon its right hinges, all the other inferior wheeles would quickly be ſet to keep motion and harmony with that, to the bringing in, with great facility, a well compoſed order of Government throughout the whole State.

And this without difficulty may be done, if this one Rule be held unto and obſerved; which is, that in the time of the Common-wealths conſtituting, and in a Nation much divided in affection and intereſt about their own Government, none be admitted

ted to the exercise of the right and priviledge of a free Citizen, for a season, but either such as are free born, in respect of their holy and righteous principles, flowing from the birth of the Spirit of God in them, (restoring man in measure and degree, as at the first by Creation) unto the right of Rule and Dominion) or else who, by their tryed good affection and faithfulness to common right and publick freedome, have deserved to be trusted with the keeping or bearing their own Armes in the publick defence.

And if unto this selected number of Citizens, the liberty of exercising the choice of the Magistrates for the whole Body, should be for a season restrained; and they cast into a military order and discipline (as the *Israelites* of old, when they once had turned their backs upon *Egypt*, the House of Bondage) and shall become distributed in distinct Tribes and Divisions, within the borders of their several Habitations or Precincts where they dwell; it could be no sooner said unto them, as *Moses* did to the Children of *Israel*, *Take and choose you able and wise men, such as fear God, men of truth and hating covetousness, that they may be made Heads over the People, of Thousands, of Hundreds, of Fifties, and of Tens*; but the thing would carry that self-evidence in it to the minds of the People, how good and possible it is for them so to doe, that they would most cheerfully set about, and accordingly effect it.

As to what then hath been said in this matter, pointing out some dissatisfaction that rests with me, in reference to the definition you make of an equal Common-wealth, and the way you find requisite to place the Ballance in it, by an Agrarian and Law for equal interessing the People in the Soyl, and an universal liberty unto election of the Magistrates, through the help of the rotation and use of the Ballot, the result of all amounts to this; That whilst holiness in principles, by way of spiritual birth, is wanting amongst the People, as one chief Ingredient to qualifie them to the exercise of the right of free Citizens, and a tryed good affection and faithfulness to common Right and publick Freedome remaines undiscovered, the way by you proposed, for the well constituting a Common-wealth, may bring it to a state and degree

gree of Freedome very desirable, and which being attained we may be in the fairer and nearer way to the other.

But where (as you all along most deservedly have regard unto) the foundations of Government shall be laid so firm and deep as in the Word of God, bottomed upon that Corner-stone the Lord Jesus, there is a Heavenly Ballance to be met with, which keeps all even. For upon this Stone there are seven eyes; God himself is he that engraves the graving thereof, and gives forth, according to that pattern, the order and constitution of Magistracy, in its primitive purity and perfection; where the Authority and propoſing Power, by which to move and keep the will of the People in its right course of obedience, is first originally in God and Christ himself, as their Political King and Civil Legislator; and next under Christ, the Ruling Senate, whose Office it is; and as you your self well say, from the excellency of their debate and deliberation, providently and faithfully unfolded to the People, they do frequently cause and necessitate the will and the deed in them. So much may one man, for the excellency of his aid, be as in the place and power of God unto another.

This sort of Government is contained in these following Queries.

Quer. 1. Whether in the restitution of all things, so assuredly promised, and so often foretold, since the World began, *Acts* 3. Man himself shall not be restored to the gift and exercise of Righteousness in his natural judgement and will, in the perfection, as to kind, wherein he was at first created; (as in the Type, in a good degree, did befall *Nebuchadnezzar* in the exercise of Government, *Dan.* 4. 34, 36.) to the enabling of whole Nations, in this day of Gods Power, in such manner to obey Gods Voyce and keep his Covenant, as shall render them unto God a Kingdome and holy Nation, in the relation of his Subjects; and he shall be to them a King or supreme Legislator, accepted and voted by the Peoples free and common consent, as *Exod.* 19.

Quer. 2. Whether such a restored People and holy Nation,

made after this manner Gods peculiar treasure, and he their chief Magistrate, and directed by the Spirit of their Head, to put themselves in the best capacity they can (first to hear what God hath to propose to them, as the rule of their obedience to him: Secondly, to exercise that which they agree to bear the stamp and authority of the Wisdom of the Nation, in matters that appertain to the oversight of the whole Body, in the hands of a Senate or Council of Elders, for the executive part of the supreme Power: And thirdly, to give the publick vote and suffrage of the whole People, in a way of assent or dissent, upon all matters proposed by the Senate, to passe into Laws amongst them, by their own chosen Deputies and Representative Body, for that purpose constituted by them from time to time, as need shall require, to joyn with the Senate) be not that righteous and faithful City spoken of, *Isai.* 1. 26. to whom her Judges are restored, as at the first, and her Counsellors as at the beginning, by whose Decrees that Law goes forth, wherein Christ himself shall appear judging amongst the Nations, and rebuking many People, until he settle Peace and Righteousnes in the Earth?

Quer. 3. Whether such a Ruling Senate, consisting of a competent number of fit and meet persons to be made Heads of the People, and by their free suffrage elected and designed to the office of executing the supreme Power, (as the work singly appertaining to this chief Council of Elders) and also to the exercise of the Legislative Power, in association with the Representative Body of the People, to be by them from time to time summoned and called together for that purpose, in which general and great Assembly to propose all such matters whatsoever as are to passe into Laws, and to receive the distinct and publick vote of the peoples consent to them, before they be of the force of Laws or binding, be not the most exact platforme of the purest kind of popular Government, and that which hath its foundation and first pattern in the Word of God, in the practise of *Israels* Commonwealth, and so plainly of Divine Creation and Institution?

Quer. 4. Lastly, Whether the beginnings of such a Government as this, as small as they may be at first, and accompanied with the mixture of humane frailties and infirmities, may not however, through

through the mighty and universal pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, so grow and increase, as at last to come up unto a perfect day; in such sort as the publick sentence and judgement of such a restored People and holy Nation, in their Assemblies of Judicature, may not so much be the judgement of Man, as of the Lord himself, their King and Law-giver, and be owned by him to be the same here on Earth, with his which is in Heaven, and therefore to be ratified and made stable, by the Word of his Heavenly Power, executed by his mighty Angels, as well as by their earthly forces and strength of mens bodies, against all opposers and rebellious gain-sayers, to the setting up of Christ as King throughout the whole Earth, and causing the Nations and Kingdomes of this World to become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, in a visible manner here below, for the space of a thousand yeares; in which time the Moon shall be confounded, and the Sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hoasts shall raign in Mount *Sion* and in *Jerusalem*, before his Ancients gloriously, shewing himself King in *Jeshurum*, when the Heads of the People and Tribes of *Israel* are gathered together before the Lord in the day of their Assembly?

By this time, I suppose, I have well nigh tyred out your patience, having drawn out my Letter to a greater length then becomes this way of address. But since my aim in setting these things before your consideration is (as I said at first) not to put lead on your Chariot wheels, to cause them to drive heavily, but rather to be an occasion to carry on the Work in a straight line unto its perfection; you will, I hope, the more willingly bear with me, and not be offended at this small glimpse, which, duly improved, may at length lead unto a fuller and clearer prospect into the new Heavens and new Earth, wherein dwels Righteousness, and may in some sort provide us against the time when the fashion of the old ones shall wear off, and passe away with great noise and fervent heat, which is the faith and assured expectation of him, who is

Your true Honourer,

and real Servant.

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